



## **ATSDR DAILY SITUATION REPORT (SITREP)**

**SUBJECT:** Gold King Mine Cleanup Site

**SITREP #** Gold King 1

**DATE AND TIME:** Tuesday, August 11, 2015, 5 PM EDT

**\* PERIOD REFLECTED:** 08/05/15 5PM EDT through 08/11/15 5PM EDT

**ATSDR REGIONAL DIRECTOR:** Dan Strausbaugh, [dvs3@cdc.gov](mailto:dvs3@cdc.gov), 303-717-2952

**ASPR REGIONAL ADMINISTRATOR:** Ron Pinheiro

**SUMMARY [August 6-10, 2015]:** On August 5, while investigating the Gold King Mine in Colorado, an EPA cleanup team triggered a release of approximately 3 million gallons of mine wastewater into Cement Creek that ran into the Animus River. The local sheriff closed the river for all recreational uses and notifications went to any water systems downstream to close their water intakes.

### ATSDR Actions

On **August 8<sup>th</sup>**, ATSDR provided a letter health consult to the San Juan Basin Health Department (SJBHD) at their request, that evaluated water samples collected by EPA at six locations on August 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup>. ATSDR's evaluation found:

- Sampling results indicate a downward trend over time as plume migrates downstream. Sampling site data show levels that exceeded the screening levels. The downward trend continues for the sites sampled.
- The public should not be intentionally drinking raw river water.
- For some individuals who may be overly sensitive, skin or eye contact may result in irritation at this pH. Flushing exposed skin and eyes with clean water should be adequate to reduce discomfort. No long-term harm is expected from skin/eye contact with water at this pH.

. ATSDR shared the following public health guidance with SJHD:

- Avoid areas with orange discoloration in the river water.
- Do not intentionally drink raw river water.
- Wash with soap and water after contact with the river water to minimize exposure to the metals, and also any bacteria that maybe present in the untreated river water.
- Contact a local health care provider if feeling illness as a result of exposure to contaminated river water.
- Additional monitoring should be conducted until the river returns to pre-release levels.
- If local health care providers have questions they can contact the ATSDR Regional Office staff who can arrange a consultation between the health care provider and ATSDR physician.

On **August 10<sup>th</sup>**, ATSDR provided technical scientific information (screening values and background tox information) to the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE).

Other Support Activities:

- ATSDR region 8 staff provided health education to the local health department (ongoing).

- NCEH/ATSDR reached out to IHS chief of staff and offered any assistance. (No requests at this time)

Note: There is a high level of mistrust of EPA at the local level due to the circumstances of the event, potentially complicating ATSDR's effort to provide public health assistance.

#### **SUMMARY [August 11, 2015]:**

- By request, deployed an ATSDR Environmental Health Scientist to Durango, CO.  
Objective—provide environmental public health support (data review and health education/risk communication) to the SJBHD in Durango, CO, and the San Juan County Health Department in Silverton, CO.
  - Left the morning of 08/11/15 and arrive in Durango around 2 PM MDT.
  - CDPHE will also be sending two staff members to support the response (expertise in drinking water and environmental health).
- NCEH/ATSDR has received the following requests for consideration:
  - National Park Service asked to be included on any proposed Epi-Aids. (none considered at this time)
  - Durango Herald requested an interview. (Expect to refer to EPA for appropriate response)
- NCEH/ATSDR will participate on an Aug 12, 4:00 PM, teleconference for National Response Team members.

#### **ATSDR RESOURCES CURRENTLY COMMITTED:**

TYPE (PERSONNEL, ETC.)	#	ACTIVITIES PERFORMED
ATSDR Personnel on the ground	1	Travelled to site, discussions with local health departments.
ATSDR staff in EPA R8 EOC	1	Coordinating ATSDR activities with EPA emergency responders

#### **RESOURCES NEEDED:**

TYPE (DATA ANALYSIS, PH ASSESS., ETC.)	#	DATE REQUIRED
Fact sheet requested by US NORTHCOM		8/12/15

**DISTRIBUTION: OS/ASPR, OS/ASL, OS/ASPA, IHS and CDC.**

**DEPARTMENTAL INTERNAL USE ONLY**